



**MEETING MINUTES
December 14, 2017**

1. Call to order -- 9:00am

Steve Raabe called roll for the Stakeholder committee; a quorum was present.
Dr. Tom Asruffi called roll for the Science Committee; a quorum was present.
Andy Sansom called roll for the Implementing Committee; a quorum was present.

2. Public Comment.

Steve Raabe asked for comments from the public. There were none.

3. Receive report from the Program Manager on general topics related to the Habitat Conservation Plan.

- **Spring systems and index well update:**

Chad Furl presented a hydrologic update on the Comal and San Marcos spring systems and index wells.

No questions.

- **J-17 forecast:**

Darren Thompson (SAWS) presented the 2017-2018 J-17 and climate forecast. Modeling projections indicate above normal temperatures, low precipitation and possible Stage 3 conditions in August.

No Questions.

- **2017 EAHCP Annual Report timeline and progress**

Shaun Payne presented a timeline and progress of the 2017 EAHCP Annual Report. In November, EAHCP received required sections of the Annual Report from the permittees. Committee review on the draft report will begin in January 2018. The final Annual Report will be approved by the Implementing Committee and submitted to USFWS by late March 2018.

Diane Wassinech asked for clarification on which committees will be reviewing and commenting on the draft Annual Report. Shaun Payne answered that all committees will have the opportunity to review and comment on the draft.

Nathan Pence added that the draft Annual Report should not be distributed to individuals outside of the committee. A final Annual Report can be provided to city officials and others upon request.

- **2018 EAHCP Committee dates and locations (Attachment 1)**
Alicia Reinmund-Martinez presented the upcoming meetings for 2018 and provided a general agenda.
- **Recap of the National HCP Coalition 2017 Annual Meeting**
Alicia Reinmund-Martinez provided a recap of the 3rd National HCP coalition. Seven states and many HCP organizations were represented at the conference. Mrs. Reinmund-Martinez and Nathan Pence attended the coalition and had the opportunity to speak with other HCP attendees. Key themes throughout the conference included: the success of conservation measures, the advancement of funding strategies and increasing support of habitat conservation plans.

Myron Hess asked if the Upper Santa Ana River HCP had any similarities to the EAHCP.

Nathan Pence answered that the EAHCP is similar to the Upper Santa Ana River HCP in that their program also includes groundwater, springflow modeling, ecological modeling and involves numerous counties and stakeholders. However, the Upper Santa Ana River HCP is currently in the planning phase in obtaining an ITP.

Mr. Pence also shared that the Washington County HCP, which is currently in the ITP renewal process, recommended an early renewal of the ITP with USFWS.

Mr. Pence noted that Darcy Frownfelter from EAA also attended the coalition and gathered new information from a legal perspective (NEPA, ESA).

Dr. Tom Arsuffi asked if there was any analysis at the coalition on the public and economic benefit of the presence of an HCP in a community. Alicia Reinmund-Martinez answered that there were no presentations specifically given on the topic however, it was a concept that many HCPs mentioned. Mrs. Reinmund-Martinez remarked on the benefit of the permitting process and how local agencies, such as the Williamson County HCP, have provided many benefits to their community. Mr. Pence noted that many public and private agencies have utilized the HCP permitting process to expedite traditionally slow developments by making the health and protection of the environment a top priority.

Mr. Pence also shared the possibility of applying for Section 6 funding for objectives that are not specifically covered in the HCP.

Diane Wassinech asked if the January NAS meeting will be open or closed to the public. Mrs. Reinmund-Martinez answered that portions of the NAS meeting will be open to the public. Mr. Pence recommended to refer to the NAS agenda posted on the EAHCP website to determine appropriate times to attend.

- **Update on the National Academy of Sciences review**

Nathan Pence reiterated that the NAS meeting will be held at the Edwards Aquifer Authority on January 3-5 and provided an overview of the upcoming NAS agenda for *Report 3*.

No questions

- **Update on the EAHCP Science Committee**

Dr. Chad Furl presented the results of the EAHCP Science Committee officer elections. Dr. Butch Weckerly will be the Chair of the Science Committee in 2018 and Chad Norris will serve as Vice-Chair.

No questions.

- **Installation of new monitoring equipment**

Dr. Chad Furl provided an update on the purpose, place and installation of the new Sessoms Creek water quality monitoring gauge.

Dr. Furl answered that the data collected by the Sessoms Creek gauge will be maintained by EAA databases and can be made available to anyone upon an information request.

Dianne Wassinech asked about the location of the gauge. Dr. Furl answered that new monitoring gauge is located in Sessoms Creek.

Myron Hess asked if there was a real-time monitoring station in the San Marcos River. Nathan Pence clarified that there is now a real-time monitoring station in both the San Marcos River and Sessoms creek.

- **2018 EAA Budget**

Roland Ruiz presented the 2018 EAA Budget Overview on revenue, expenses and staffing. Shelly Hendrix noted that by the end of the year (2017) the reserve will be around \$34 million.

Tom Taggart asked for clarification on the relationship between the EAHCP budget overview and the amended budget. Nathan Pence answered that some remaining expenditures will be carried over from 2017 to 2018.

Dr. Charlie Krietler asked what the budget is for the refugia program. Nathan Pence answered that the budget for the refugia program is about \$2 million in 2017 and about \$4 million for 2018. However, it should be noted that both of those numbers are very rough estimates.

4. **Discussion and possible action to nominate and appoint new officers for the 2018 Implementing Committee. (Attachment 2) ***Implementing Committee members only***

Andy Sansom explained the process of rotating officer positions of the Implementing Committee. Darren Thompson was nominated for the Chair position, Greg Malatek was nominated for the Vice Chair position and Roland Ruiz was nominated for the Secretary position. Roland Ruiz motioned to approve the rotating officer positions. Tom Taggart Second. No objections. Motion approved.

5. **Discussion and possible action to nominate and elect new officers for the 2018 Stakeholder Committee. ***Stakeholder Committee members only***

Steve Raabe nominated Myron Hess for Chair of the Stakeholder Committee. Diane Wassinech motioned to elect by affirmation. Jim Bower seconded. No Objections. Motion approved.

Con Mims nominated Doris Cooksey for Vice Chair of the Stakeholder Committee. Con Mims motioned to elect by affirmation. Adam Yablonski seconded. No objections. Motion approved.

Chuck Ahrens nominated Patrick Shriver for Secretary of the Stakeholder Committee. Chuck Ahrens motioned to elect by affirmation. Myron Hess seconded. No objections. Motion approved.

6. **Presentation on the Refugia Program.**

Dr. Chad Furl introduced members of the USFWS to the committee.

Dr. Ken Ostrand (USFWS) presented activities and accomplishments of the refugia program in 2017 including a review of covered species sampling methods, captivity and rates of survivorship.

Myron Hess and Diane Wassinech asked about the fountain darter deaths that occurred in May and the possibility of parasitic infections. Dr. Ostrand answered that the deaths that occurred in May are likely due to routine mortality. Diagnostic tests are currently underway to determine the exact cause of death.

Dr. Tom Arsuffi asked if Texas wild rice seeds are propagated in the facility. Dr. Ostrand answered that Texas wild rice is cultivated in the facility (SMARC) and then transported for reintroduction into the San Marcos River.

Myron Hess asked about the frequency of collecting species in the spring systems. Dr. Ostrand answered that as individuals in captivity die throughout the year, those losses will be replaced. Once a population becomes established in the refugia, collection can be supplemented with less frequent sampling for certain species.

Dr. Chad Furl summarized important documents, reports, 2017 work plan budget of the refugia program.

7. Presentation of the EAA's updated MODFLOW Groundwater Model and rerun of the EAHCP Springflow Protection Bottom-Up Package modeled results.

Roland Ruiz introduced the EAA modeling team to the committee and provided a brief introduction to the MODFLOW Hydromodel. Mark Hamilton presented an overview of the EAA Aquifer Management Services Division. Jim Winterle provided background, analysis and statistics of EAA's updated MODFLOW Groundwater Model.

Myron Hess asked about the stress period represented in the models.

Jim Winterle answered that stress period are changes in recharge and pumping. Each month has a new stress period and can be broken into time-steps

8. Presentation on the preview of the Aquifer Storage and Recovery Optimization Adaptive Management concept.

Roland Ruiz introduced Marc Friberg to the committee and a brief introduction to the ASR program. Marc Friberg presented the current ASR program requirements, analysis on ASR lease trigger scenarios, proposed program amendments, outreach and budget analysis. Full presentation can be found on eahcp.org.

Adam Yablonski asked about uncertainty regarding USGS Recharge and the 10-year rolling average. He asked which will be used as a trigger. Mr. Friberg said we will still use USGS official determinations. Tom Taggart said we should consider extreme conditions at the springs as well as recharge averages and well levels. Minimum springflow levels during periods not triggered when using rolling recharge average could be too late when considering falling springflows. Mr. Friberg communicated that there is more certainty when considering the variety of springflow protection measures and the major concern now is "marketability" of the ASR program.

Myron Hess asked what the issue is with using a dual trigger, as is currently outlined in the HCP. Mr. Friberg responded that a dual trigger prevents a permit holder from being comfortable with a specific date when a single trigger can provide more predictability. Mr. Hess commented that a springflow trigger would provide additional comfort due to being prepared in unexpected, worse case scenarios. Mr. Friberg reiterated, that we should not lose sight on the other protection measures. He also mentioned that municipal and industrial users will use this program option while currently there is little to no participation right now.

Mr. Friberg asked the committees if there is any additional information they would like to see. Mr. Hess communicated that he will need to look into this more deeply and decide what the possible implications are in moving from a dual to a single trigger. Colette Barron-Bradsby asked how EAA will determine marketplace interest in this product. Mr. Friberg said that irrigators who are currently in one-year leases want a new product. Municipal and industrial users do not like long-term leases.

9. **Questions from the public.**
No Comment.

10. **Adjourn: 3:02pm**



Patrick Shriver
Stakeholder Committee Secretary